

# San Antonio church, military volunteers help feed hungry families

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SAN ANTONIO—Last year, Pastor Rob Johnson asked two senior adults at [Christian Family Baptist Church](#) to pray with him about starting a community action team. Their answered prayers can be seen in 1,485 needy families in northwest San Antonio who received 110,000 pounds of food this year.



Personnel from Lackland Air Force Base join church volunteers in unloading groceries from the San Antonio Food Bank and bagging them for families to receive at a drive-through food distribution event on the grounds of Christian Family Baptist Church in San Antonio. (PHOTO/Courtesy of Rob Johnson) Working in cooperation with the [San Antonio Food Bank](#), Christian Family Baptist Church served as the host site for a drive-through food distribution 11

times in 2014. An average of 60 volunteers—about two-thirds from Lackland Air Force Base—sorted, bagged and distributed about 10,000 pounds of groceries on each occasion.

“We believe God wants us to feed his children,” Johnson said. “Our ultimate goal is to become a food distribution center that is open five or six days a week. The hunger in this part of San Antonio is not as obvious as in some places, but it’s real.”

The church held a benefit concert in January to raise money for its first food distribution effort. The concert netted within \$10 of the total amount needed.

“We took that as evidence God wanted us to do this,” Johnson said.

### **Military personnel joined in**

Johnson, retired from the U.S. Air Force, contacted officials at Lackland, inviting military personnel to participate as volunteers on distribution days.

[San Antonio Baptist Association](#) provided funding for one food distribution event this year. Individuals in the church and the community—including one family on a fixed income who saved several months—supplied the money needed for others.

“This is a community effort hosted by our church,” Johnson said.



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The multicultural church began 10 years ago as a Bible study in Johnson's home. It later became a mission of [Crossroads Baptist Church in San Antonio](#), meeting first in a fire station and later in an RV park. With the help of the [Baptist Church Loan Corporation](#) and the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the church eventually moved to its current location on seven acres not far from Sea World.

Christian Family Baptist Church wants to satisfy both the physical and spiritual hunger of people in its community, church leaders said.

As families wait in line to receive groceries at food distribution events, a pair of volunteers—a 70-year-old retired pastor and a young minister to students—stop at every car to ask if the families have other needs and to offer to pray with them.

Johnson intentionally paired the youth minister with the seasoned pastor for mentoring. His church takes seriously its commitment to discipleship—to teach, train and encourage parents and grandparents to disciple their families and neighbors, helping them develop healthy spiritual relationships.

### **Discipling the community**

“Ultimately, we want to disciple this community,” he said.

Christian Family Baptist Church operates a barbecue trailer it sets up at community events and as an outreach at a busy intersection. Proceeds from the sale of barbecued brisket, sausage, pork and chicken go toward the church’s long-range plans for community ministry, including a sports field for young people, a walking track for senior adults, a Christian school, and ministries focused on sexual integrity and divorce recovery.

“Our overall strategy is to build healthy relationships with the community where we want to minister,” Johnson said.

### **Outreach and an opportunity to serve**

The church intends to reach non-Christians with the gospel and give Christians opportunities to grow as they serve. Some Christian families in the area drive 30 or 40 minutes across town to attend worship services, but the distance keeps them from being involved in ministries, he noted.

“We want to build relationships and offer opportunities to serve,” Johnson said. “It gives a sense of ownership in joining us in ministry to their community.”